

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1-31 are pending in the present application. In the March 11, 2004 Office Action, claims 3-4, 11-12, 19-20, and 25-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. Claims 1, 6, and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,229,709 to Hardt et al. (hereinafter, "Hardt"). Claims 2-3, 9-11, 14-15, 17, 18-19, 22-23, 25-26, 29, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,621,373 to Hodsdon (hereinafter, "Hodsdon"). Claims 4, 12, 20, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,121,296 to Hsu (hereinafter, "Hsu"). Claims 5, 13, 21, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,960,942 to Thornton (hereinafter, "Thornton"). Claims 8, 16, 24, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,339,536 to Buican et al. (hereinafter, "Buican"). The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112:

The Examiner rejected claims 3, 11, 19, and 25 for being unclear as to the meaning of "a front surface having at least one opening, the front surface abutting a second side of the first surface, wherein one or more of the plurality of buttons of the keypad protrude through the at least one opening."

The applicants would like to refer the Examiner to FIG. 8, which is described on page 6, line 21 - page 8, line 14 of the specification. This drawing shows the keypad 170, first surface 172, and front surface 101. As shown in the drawing, keypad 170 includes a plurality of buttons. First surface 172 has a plurality of holes that correspond to the plurality of buttons on the keypad 170. The front surface 101 is mounted flush against the first surface 172 such that the first surface 172 is disposed between the keypad 170 and the front surface 101. The front surface 101 has at least one opening to allow the buttons on keypad 170 to protrude through. Therefore,

when the communication panel is constructed, the buttons on the keypad protrude through two surfaces, the first surface 172 and the front surface 101. For example, looking at FIG. 8, buttons 118 on keypad 170 protrude through holes 178 on the first surface 172. Buttons 118 further protrude through opening 214 of the front surface 101.

Consequently, reading the language of claims 3, 11, 19, and 25, with reference numbers inserted for clarity, while referring to FIG. 8 of the present application, the applicants submit that the language of claims 3, 11, 19, and 25 is clear: “a front surface (101) having at least one opening (214), the front surface (101) abutting a second side of the first surface (172), wherein one or more of the plurality of buttons (118) of the keypad (170) protrude through the at least one opening (214).” Accordingly, the applicants submit that the language of claims 3, 11, 19, and 25 is definite under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claims 8, 16, 24, and 31 for being unclear as to the meaning of “third and fourth surfaces disposed at opposing ends of the first surface that are perpendicular to the first surface.” The applicants again would like to refer the Examiner to FIG. 8, which is described on page 6, line 21 - page 8, line 14 of the specification. This drawing shows third surface 136 and fourth surface 108, which are the vertical sidewalls of the apparatus. It can be seen that these surfaces, 136 and 108, are perpendicular to the first surface 172 and are disposed at opposing ends of the first surface 172. The Examiner states that the recited structure does not make sense given the recitation of claim 1, “a second surface substantially perpendicular to the first surface.” However, FIG. 8 shows vertical sidewalls 136 and 108 perpendicular to the first surface 172 as well as second surface 138 (the bottom surface) also substantially perpendicular to the first surface 172 as recited by claim 1. Accordingly, the applicants submit that the language of claims 8, 16, 24, and 31 is definite under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner additionally rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, due to insufficient antecedent basis for the “the printed circuit board” recitation. Claim 9 has been amended to provide proper antecedent basis. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

II. Prior Art Rejections:

Independent Claim 1

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Hardt. The applicants have amended independent claim 1 to recite further features of the communication panel. Hardt does not teach, suggest, or describe each recitation of amended independent claim 1. In particular, Hardt does not teach “a first surface with a plurality of holes” and “a cover surface having a rear portion and a top portion perpendicular to the rear portion, the cover surface being mounted to the first and second surfaces such that the rear portion is parallel to and opposite the first surface and the top portion is parallel to and opposite the second surface, and wherein the first and second printed circuit boards are disposed within an interior region defined by the first surface, second surface, and cover surface” as recited by claim 1.

The Office Action equated to the bottom surface of the apparatus taught by Hardt to the first surface recited by claim 1. However, Hardt does not teach a bottom surface with a plurality of holes. Additionally, the Office Action equated the front surface of the apparatus taught by Hardt to the cover surface recited by claim 1, with the horizontal and vertical edges of the front surface being equivalent to the rear and top portions respectively of claim 1. However, using these “equivalents” as identified by the Examiner, the horizontal edge of the front surface of the Hardt apparatus is not parallel to and opposite the bottom surface of the apparatus. The horizontal edge of the front surface is opposite another horizontal edge of the front surface and not opposite the bottom surface. FIG. 1 of Hardt shows that there is not any cover surface opposite the bottom surface.

Further, the vertical edge of the front surface, according to FIG. 1 of Hardt, is not opposite the right side surface of the apparatus. Instead, the vertical edge of the front surface is adjacent to the right side surface of the apparatus and opposite another vertical edge of the front surface. Consequently, as shown in FIG. 1 of the Hardt apparatus, the bottom surface, right side surface, and horizontal and vertical edges of the front surface do not define an interior region in which the first and second printed circuit boards are disposed. For at least these reasons, independent claim 1 is allowable over Hardt.

Dependent Claim 2

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants submit that this combination fails to teach, suggest, or describe any recitation of dependent claim 2. In particular, Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach or suggest “an elastomeric keypad disposed between the first printed circuit board and a first side of the first surface, wherein the keypad has a plurality of buttons that protrude through the plurality of holes” as recited by claim 2. The Office Action suggests that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to include the elastomeric keypad taught by Hodsdon between the first printed circuit board and first surface of Hardt. The applicants respectfully disagree. First, as discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, the bottom surface of the personal computer taught by Hardt does not contain a plurality of holes through which a plurality of buttons of a keypad could protrude. Further, there is no motivation to locate a keypad between circuit board 19 and the bottom surface of the personal computer taught by Hardt. Modifying Hardt to include a keypad with buttons protruding through holes in the bottom surface of the personal computer would not make sense given that the buttons would not be accessible since the computer rests with the bottom surface on a desk or table. For at least these reasons, and because dependent claim 2 incorporates the recitations of allowable claim 1, dependent claim 2 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claim 3

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants submit that this combination fails to teach, suggest, or describe any recitation of dependent claim 3. In particular, Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach or suggest “a front surface having at least one opening, the front surface abutting a second side of the first surface, wherein one or more of the plurality of buttons of the keypad protrude through the at least one opening” as recited by claim 3. Given the explanation above with respect to the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection, the applicants believe that it should be clear that neither Hardt nor Hodsdon teaches a plurality of buttons on a keypad that protrude through a plurality of holes in a

first surface, and also protrude through at least one opening in a front surface abutting a second side of the first surface. Hodsdon teaches a plurality of buttons protruding through holes in a first surface, but does not teach a front surface through which the buttons further protrude. For at least this reason, and because dependent claim 3 incorporates the recitations of allowable base claim 1, dependent claim 3 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claims 4-7

Because claims 4-7 further limit allowable independent claim 1, dependent claims 4-7 are allowable over the cited art.

Dependent Claim 8

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Buican. The applicants submit that this combination fails to teach, suggest, or describe any recitation of dependent claim 8. In particular, Hardt in view of Buican fails to teach or suggest “third and fourth surfaces disposed at opposing ends of the first surface that are perpendicular to the first surface; and a first bracket mounted to the third surface and a second bracket mounted to the fourth” as recited by claim 8. As clarified above with respect to the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection, according to one aspect of the present invention, the third and fourth surfaces are vertical sidewalls. As seen in FIG. 8 of the current application, first bracket 112 mounts to the third surface 136, while second bracket 110 mounts to the fourth surface 108. Hardt teaches a bracket attached to the rear surface. The Office Action suggests that the rear surface is equivalent to the third surface recited by claim 8, while the left side surface is equivalent to the recited fourth surface. However the left side surface and rear surface of the Hardt apparatus are not “disposed at opposing ends” of the bottom surface of the computer chassis. In fact, they abut one another, disposed on adjacent sides of the bottom surface. Accordingly, for at least this reason, and because claim 8 depends from allowable independent claim 1, dependent claim 8 is allowable over Hardt in view of Buican.

Independent Claim 9

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants submit that Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach, suggest, or describe each recitation of independent claim 9. In particular, this combination fails to teach or suggest “a first surface with a plurality of holes” and “a first elastomeric keypad positioned between a first side of the first surface and the first printed circuit board, the first elastomeric keypad having a plurality of buttons that protrude through the plurality of holes of the first surface” as recited by claim 9. As stated by the Examiner in the Office Action, Hardt does not teach these recitations. For the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, it would not be obvious to combine the structure of Hodsdon to the computer chassis taught by Hardt in order to include a keypad with buttons protruding through the bottom surface of the personal computer. Accordingly, independent claim 9 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claim 10

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants have amended dependent claim 10 to recite further features of the communication panel. The applicants submit that Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach, suggest, or describe each recitation of amended dependent claim 10. In particular, this combination fails to teach or suggest “a cover surface having a rear portion and a top portion perpendicular to the rear portion, the cover surface being mounted to the first and second surfaces such that the rear portion is parallel to and opposite the first surface and the top portion is parallel to and opposite the second surface, and wherein the first and second printed circuit boards are disposed within an interior region defined by the first surface, second surface, and cover surface” as recited by claim 10. This recitation was also rejected with respect to independent claim 1 as being anticipated by Hardt. For the reasons discussed with respect to independent claim 1, Hardt does not teach this recited structure. The Office Action does not suggest that Hodsdon teaches this recited structure. The applicants submit that Hodsdon also fails to teach this recitation. Accordingly, because Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to recite the recitations of claim 10, and

because claim 10 depends from allowable independent claim 9, dependent claim 10 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claim 11

Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants submit that this combination fails to teach, suggest, or describe any recitation of dependent claim 11. In particular, Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach or suggest “a front surface having at least one opening, the front surface abutting a second side of the first surface, wherein one or more of the plurality of buttons of the keypad protrude through the at least one opening” as recited by claim 11. For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 3, and because claim 11 further limits allowable base claim 9, dependent claim 11 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claims 12-15

Because claims 12-15 further limit allowable independent claim 9, dependent claims 12-15 are allowable over the cited art.

Dependent Claim 16

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Buican. The applicants submit that this combination fails to teach, suggest, or describe any recitation of dependent claim 16. In particular, Hardt in view of Buican fails to teach or suggest “third and fourth surfaces disposed at opposing ends of the first surface that are perpendicular to the first surface; and a first bracket mounted to the third surface and a second bracket mounted to the fourth” as recited by claim 16. For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 8, and because claim 16 further limits allowable base claim 9, dependent claim 16 is allowable over Hardt in view of Buican.

Independent Claim 17

Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants submit that Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach, suggest, or describe each recitation of independent claim 17. In particular, this combination fails to teach or suggest “a first elastomeric keypad abutting the first printed circuit board, the elastomeric keypad having a plurality of conductive contact pads aligned with the plurality of electrical contacts of the first printed circuit board” as recited by claim 17. For the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, it would not be obvious to combine the structure of Hodsdon to the computer chassis taught by Hardt in order to include an electrometric keypad abutting the first printed circuit board since the buttons of the keypad would have to protrude through the bottom surface of the personal computer. Accordingly, independent claim 17 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claim 18

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants have amended dependent claim 18 to recite further features of the communication panel. The applicants submit that Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach, suggest, or describe each recitation of amended dependent claim 18. In particular, this combination fails to teach or suggest “a first surface with a plurality of holes” and “a cover surface having a rear portion and a top portion perpendicular to the rear portion, the cover surface being mounted to the first and second surfaces such that the rear portion is parallel to and opposite the first surface and the top portion is parallel to and opposite the second surface, and wherein the first and second printed circuit boards are disposed within an interior region defined by the first surface, second surface, and cover surface” as recited by claim 18. These recitations were also rejected with respect to independent claim 1 as being anticipated by Hardt. For the reasons discussed with respect to independent claim 1, Hardt does not teach this recited structure. The Office Action does not suggest that Hodsdon teaches this recited structure. The applicants submit that Hodsdon also fails to teach this recitation. Accordingly, because Hardt in view of

Hodsdon fails to recite the recitations of claim 18, and because claim 18 depends from allowable independent claim 17, dependent claim 18 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claim 19

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants submit that this combination fails to teach, suggest, or describe any recitation of dependent claim 19. In particular, Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach or suggest “a front surface having at least one opening, the front surface abutting the first surface, wherein one or more of the plurality of buttons of the keypad protrude through the at least one opening” as recited by claim 19. For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 3, and because claim 19 further limits allowable base claim 17, dependent claim 19 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claim 20-23

Because claims 20-23 further limit allowable independent claim 17, dependent claims 20-23 are allowable over the cited art.

Dependent Claim 24

Claim 24 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Buican. The applicants submit that this combination fails to teach, suggest, or describe any recitation of dependent claim 24. In particular, Hardt in view of Buican fails to teach or suggest “third and fourth surfaces disposed at opposing ends of the first surface that are perpendicular to the first surface; and a first bracket mounted to the third surface and a second bracket mounted to the fourth” as recited by claim 24. For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 8, and because claim 24 further limits allowable base claim 17, dependent claim 24 is allowable over Hardt in view of Buican.

Independent Claim 25

Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants submit that Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach, suggest, or describe each recitation of independent claim 25. In particular, this combination fails to teach or suggest “a first surface having a plurality of holes” and “a first elastomeric keypad positioned between a first side of the first surface and the first printed circuit board, the first elastomeric keypad having a plurality of buttons that protrude through the plurality of holes of the first surface” as recited by claim 25. As stated by the Examiner in the Office Action, Hardt does not teach these recitations. For the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, it would not be obvious to combine the structure of Hodsdon to the computer chassis taught by Hardt in order to include a keypad with buttons protruding through the bottom surface of the personal computer. Accordingly, independent claim 25 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claim 26

Claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Hodsdon. The applicants have amended dependent claim 26 to recite further features of the communication panel. The applicants submit that Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to teach, suggest, or describe each recitation of amended dependent claim 26. In particular, this combination fails to teach or suggest “a cover surface having a rear portion and a top portion perpendicular to the rear portion, the cover surface being mounted to the first and second surfaces such that the rear portion is parallel to and opposite the first surface and the top portion is parallel to and opposite the second surface, and wherein the first and second printed circuit boards are disposed within an interior region defined by the first surface, second surface, and cover surface” as recited by claim 26. This recitation was also rejected with respect to independent claim 1 as being anticipated by Hardt. For the reasons discussed with respect to independent claim 1, Hardt does not teach this recited structure. The Office Action does not suggest that Hodsdon teaches this recited structure. The applicants submit that Hodsdon also fails to teach this recitation. Accordingly, because Hardt in view of Hodsdon fails to recite the recitations of claim 26, and

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because claim 26 depends from allowable independent claim 25, dependent claim 26 is allowable over Hardt in view of Hodsdon.

Dependent Claims 27-30

Because claims 27-30 further limit allowable independent claim 25, dependent claims 27-30 are allowable over the cited art.

Dependent Claim 31

Claim 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hardt in view of Buican. The applicants submit that this combination fails to teach, suggest, or describe any recitation of dependent claim 31. In particular, Hardt in view of Buican fails to teach or suggest “third and fourth surfaces disposed at opposing ends of the first surface that are perpendicular to the first surface; and a first bracket mounted to the third surface and a second bracket mounted to the fourth” as recited by claim 31. For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 8, and because claim 31 further limits allowable base claim 25, dependent claim 31 is allowable over Hardt in view of Buican.

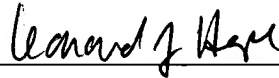
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III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, the applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and reexamination of the application and allowance of the claims at an early date is solicited. If the Examiner has any questions or comments concerning this matter, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: June 10, 2004

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